

REMARKS

Entry of the foregoing and reconsideration of the application identified in caption as amended, pursuant to and consistent with the Rules of Practice in Patent Cases, and in light of the remarks which follow, is respectfully requested.

Claim 1 has been amended and new claims 37-47 have been added so that claims 1-11 and 37-47 will be pending upon entry of the present amendment. Support for the amendments to claim 1 and new independent claim 37 can be found at least in the examples illustrated by Figures 4 and 5, as well as in the specification as set forth below:

“the amount and/or distribution of adhesive applied to each individual pocket may be varied, thereby enabling control of the firmness of the regions of the innerspring assembly”

(page 2, line 27-page 3, line 2, of the published PCT application)

“The degree of adhesion between adjacent pockets in successive strings in the assembled innerspring assembly determines the degree of firmness of that part of the innerspring assembly, and hence that part of a mattress in which the innerspring assembly is used. It is thus possible to control the firmness of the mattress by appropriate application of adhesive to the respective pockets.”

(page 8, lines 3-7, of the published PCT application)

Accordingly, no new matter has been presented by the present amendments or newly submitted claims.

Claims 1, 2, 5, and 9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,143,122 to Mossbeck et. al (“Mossbeck”). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The examiner alleges that Mossbeck discloses all of the features of present claim 1, including the following feature:

“wherein the amount and/or distribution of adhesive applied to each individual pocket may be varied”

The examiner cites column 3, lines 33-42; column 5, lines 23-25; and Figure 1D of Mossbeck in support of this allegation.

The passages of Mossbeck cited by the examiner disclose:

“...the spray pattern on the string of pocketed coil springs...includes a greater amount of adhesive deposited on the central portion of each coil spring relative to the remainder of the adhesive pattern”.

“...a region 26 of greater concentration of adhesive on each pocketed coil spring 14 which is located generally equidistance from the adjacent pocketed coil springs 14 of the string 12 or on the tangent of the pocketed coil spring 14.”

The present invention as set forth in present claim 1 was not intended to cover varying the amount or distribution of adhesive within a pocketed coil spring, but rather among pocketed coil springs.

Claim 1 is novel over Mossbeck because the disclosure of Mossbeck that is entitled to an earlier priority date than that of claim 1 does not include a method for manufacturing an innerspring assembly in which the amount and/or distribution of adhesive applied to each individual pocket may be varied relative to the amount and/or distribution of adhesive applied to other pockets, as more clearly set forth by proposed amended claim 1.

The embodiment disclosed by Mossbeck that is entitled to an earlier priority date than that of proposed amended claim 1, and in which adhesive is applied from a plurality of adhesive applicators to a string of pocketed coil springs, is described at col. 6, lines 32-53, and Figure 3 of Mossbeck. In this embodiment, adhesive is sprayed continuously from a pair of nozzles mounted upon an adhesive applicator (see col. 6, lines 49-53) and the nozzles are moved in a reciprocating fashion such that a region of greater concentration of adhesive is produced over a central region of each pocketed coil spring (see col. 6, lines 45-49). The amount and/or distribution of adhesive applied to each individual pocket does not vary relative to the amount and/or distribution of adhesive applied to other pockets.

New independent claim 37 contains all of the features of amended claim 1, and therefore is also novel over the teachings of Mossbeck. Furthermore, the disclosure of Mossbeck that is entitled to an earlier priority date than that of new claim 37 does not include a method of manufacture in which the innerspring assembly includes at least one region in which the first and second strings are connected by first quantities of adhesive applied to the pockets of those strings, and at least one region in which the first and second strings are connected by second quantities of adhesive applied to the pockets of those strings, the second quantities of adhesive being less than the first quantities of adhesive. Instead, the quantities of adhesive that act to connect adjacent strings in the method disclosed by Mossbeck are

constant across the innerspring assembly. For at least the above reasons, claims 1, 2, 5, 9 and new claim 37 are not anticipated by Mossbeck.

As discussed above, the feature of claim 1 that the amount and/or distribution of adhesive applied to each individual pocket may be varied relative to the amount and/or distribution of adhesive applied to other pockets is novel over the teachings of Mossbeck.

This feature enables control of the firmness of regions of the innerspring assembly. The provision of a plurality of adhesive applicators enables adhesive to be applied simultaneously, or substantially simultaneously, to a plurality of pockets of the string of pocketed coil springs, wherein the amount and/or distribution of adhesive applied to each individual pocket may be varied relative to the amount and/or distribution of adhesive applied to other pockets, thereby achieving an increase in operating speed and throughput for the manufacture of innerspring assemblies while also enabling control of the firmness of regions of the innerspring assembly.

The use of a plurality of adhesive applicators in order to vary the amount and/or distribution of adhesive applied to each individual pocket relative to the amount and/or distribution of adhesive applied to other pockets is not suggested by Mossbeck. In particular, the plurality of nozzles described by Mossbeck with reference to Figure 3 are mounted to a single adhesive applicator (see col. 6, lines 49-53) such that the amount of adhesive dispensed from the plurality of nozzles cannot be independently varied. Hence, the provision of a plurality of nozzles as taught by Mossbeck would hinder, rather than aid, any attempt to vary the amount and/or distribution of adhesive applied to each individual pocket relative to the amount and/or distribution of adhesive applied to other pockets, as defined by independent claims 1 and 37.

For at least these reasons, it would not be an obvious step for a person skilled in the art to adapt the embodiment described by Mossbeck with reference to Figure 3 so that the amount and/or distribution of adhesive applied to each individual pocket can be varied relative to the amount and/or distribution of adhesive applied to other pockets.

Accordingly, claims 1, 2, 9 and 37 are not obvious over the teachings of Mossbeck. Withdrawal of the record rejection and allowance of claims 1, 2, 9 and 37-47 is respectfully requested.

Claim 6 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Mossbeck in combination with U.S. Patent No. 5,792,309 to Eto ("Eto") and WO 96/07345 to St. Clair

("St. Clair"). Claims 1-5 and 7-11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,016,305 to Suenens ("Suenens") in combination with Mossbeck. Claim 6 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Mossbeck in combination with Suenens. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

The teachings of each of Eto, St. Clair, and Suenens fail to disclose or suggest varying the amount and/or distribution of adhesive among individual pocketed coil springs relative to each other and therefore fail to make up for the deficiencies noted above with respect to the teachings of Mossbeck. As the examiner notes with respect to Suenens, the "reference is silent as to ... the amount and/or distribution of adhesive applied to each individual pocket being varied".

Moreover, a person skilled in the art wishing to improve the methods disclosed by Suenens, Eto, and St. Clair by enabling control of the firmness of regions of the innerspring assembly would not be guided by the disclosure of Mossbeck towards using a plurality of adhesive applicators to apply adhesive to a string of pocket coil springs. In particular, as discussed above, Mossbeck discloses a method utilizing a plurality of adhesive applicator nozzles that hinders, rather than aids, any attempt to vary the amount and/or distribution of adhesive applied to each individual pocket relative to the amount and/or distribution of adhesive applied to other pockets, as defined by claim 1.

For at least the above reasons, claims 1-11 are non-obvious over the prior art documents cited by the examiner.

As discussed above in relation to novelty, the new independent claim 37 is novel over Mossbeck because the disclosure of Mossbeck that is entitled to an earlier priority date than that of new independent claim 37 does not include a method of manufacture in which the innerspring assembly may include at least one region in which the first and second strings are connected by first quantities of adhesive applied to the pockets of those strings, and at least one region in which the first and second strings are connected by second quantities of adhesive applied to the pockets of those strings, the second quantities of adhesive being less than the first quantities of adhesive. Instead, the quantities of adhesive that act to connect adjacent strings in the method disclosed by Mossbeck are constant across the innerspring assembly.

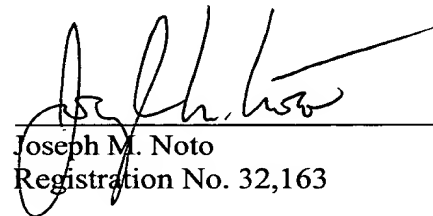
For reasons similar to those set out in relation to the non-obviousness of proposed amended claim 1, it would not be an obvious step for a person skilled in the art to

adapt the embodiment described by Mossbeck with reference to Figure 3 so that the innerspring assembly includes at least one region in which adjacent strings are connected by first quantities of adhesive applied to the pockets of those strings, and at least one region in which adjacent strings are connected by relatively lower, second quantities of adhesive applied to the pockets of those strings. As noted above, the secondary references fail to make up for the deficiencies of Mossbeck.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the record rejections and allowance of claims 1-11 and 37-47 is respectfully requested. In view of all of the foregoing, applicant submits that this case is in condition for allowance and such allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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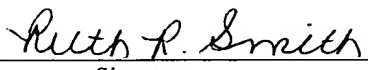
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